Identification of backward districts

1648. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken or proposed to take any measure to change the existing guidelines to identify any district as a "Backward' one in our country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the districts identified as Backward in the North-Eastern region so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) Planning and development of an area and allocation of funds for the purpose are primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government. Planning Commission has not identified any district as backward *per se* nor has it prescribed any guidelines to identify any district as backward in our country. However, the Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments in the development of backward areas through appropriate weightage for backwardness in the formula used for distribution of Normal Central Assistance and through Special Area Programmes, namely, Hill Areas Development Programme, Border Area Development Programme, North Eastern Council and Tribal Sub-Plan. In order to mitigate the special problems of the North Eastern States and Sikkim, they have been categorized as Special Category States. Further, a non-lapsable pool of funds has been constituted, out of the unspent amount from 10% of the budget of the Central Ministries, which was to be earmarked for these States and this is being allocated on a project-wise basis.

Changing the structure of Planning Commission

†1649. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMUWALIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government are contemplating to change the existing structure of Planning Commission;

(b) if so, what is the proposal for such a change; and

(c) what are the reasons for taking a decision by Government for changing the existing structure of Planning Commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Planning Commission is currently engaged in an exercise to determine what would be the most effective role for the Commission in the altered domestic and global scenario. It will take time before this results in proposals for restructuring the Planning Commission.

Measures for Perspective Planning

1650. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite planning for last 50 years, India is a home of nearly half the world's hungry people as reported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to ensure that general rural poors are in a position to purchase nutritious food with more income by perspective planning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS. (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Government is not aware of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) having published a report stating that half of the hungry population of the world live in India. FAO's reports normally refer to undernourishment and not hunger. In a publication issued by FAO in 1999 entitled "Food Insecurity in the World" which gives the details of the prevalence of undernourishment in developing countries it has been